

Respondent

< 30 Anonymous >

07:30  
Time to complete

1. Please enter your full name and municipality.

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Jeremy Silver, Medicine Hat, AB

2. What active role have you played to improve our community prior to running for council/mayor?

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With the assistance of the United Way of Southeast Alberta, and over the last 9 Christmases I have helped built what is now Medicine Hat's largest community supported Christmas dinner, the United Way Spirit of Christmas Feast. Last year we sent out over 300 meals on Christmas day to hundreds of senior citizens and average everyday people who are alone for Christmas. Over the last 4 years I've been an active part of the development of the downtown core as the chairman of a volunteer board of directors that helped develop, beautify, and promote, the downtown core. We work directly with many businesses in the downtown core helping them navigate the covid-19 lockdowns.

3. What initiatives would you propose to improve tourism, investment attraction and development to our municipality and region and support business recovery during/after the pandemic? \*

It's been proven time and time again that cities suffering from poor economic times that focus on rebuilding their downtown core start a chain reaction throughout the entire city. Our small and medium sized locally owned businesses have been impacted the most over the last two years. I would like to see a department of small business brought back to the city of Medicine Hat that would focus exclusively on small to medium-sized businesses within the city. A small group of dedicated individuals armed with all Municipal and provincial regulations and grant information that can help people who are looking to grow or start a business navigate the never ending piles of red tape. This in itself will encourage more people to shop in local stores and father the local economy.

4. In Medicine Hat, businesses pay a higher proportion of property taxes compared to the residential sector. Medicine Hat's tax gap of 2.35% is one of the highest in Alberta. What is your position on the current approach to taxation and your thoughts on potential strategies to narrow this gap?

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Lower business taxes to attract factories and major corporations to set up base in Medicine Hat is one possibility to consider. More businesses potentially may mean a larger amount of better paying jobs. More jobs, will mean a stronger economic recovery. This however will have the side effect of raising residential taxes during a time when many homeowners can barely afford to pay their mortgage and buy groceries. Lowering business taxes will have to be weighed carefully against inflation and will have the opposite effect we want it to if we raise home owners taxes too quickly. If we lower business Mill rates and raise residential Mill rates we have to be prepared as a municipality to make sure home ownership in our city does not become unaffordable through lower priced lot sales, before those better paying jobs we want to bring in finally pay off down the road.

5. If elected, what specific steps would you take to encourage & promote entrepreneurship within the region?

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A department within the city of Medicine Hat that focus strictly on Small Business Development would be able to tackle this. It should be as simple as somebody walking in the front door and saying, I make candles at home, how do I start a retail business? Entrepreneurs are everywhere, the biggest hurdles for them are understanding how the system works. Municipal governments need to take a leadership role in this department.

6. What is your stance on COVID-19 related laws that mandate requirements, including masks and vaccine passports?

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I am fully vaccinated, and wear a mask everywhere I go. I feel that healthcare is a provincial mandate. Municipal governments do not make Health Care decisions because they don't have the infectious disease experts to rely upon for advice. If we are going to start making healthcare decisions then that is acceptable to me, and I would request accordingly that our city Counsel seek the advice of infectious disease experts. That being said, our provincial government and Jason Kenney seem to be absent in the driver's seat for decisions like this. Municipal governments need to have a louder voice from here moving forward. Our provincial government is not leading the way. I objected to the mask by-law because at no point did the provincial government say it was a Municipal mandate, they just simply said nothing. A week after our mask by law came in, the provincial mask mandate came in. I believe in leadership when leadership is absent, however in this specific case, it was clear to me the province was going to have to make a decision and I objected to the mask by law being brought forward at that time. As far as the vaccine passport goes, the provincial government and Jason Kenney have specifically stated they are hands off and it is up to each municipality. As such it now becomes a municipal mandate and I would vote YES to the vaccine passport because I don't believe in passing the responsibility on to business owners and putting them in the line of fire. As well I also acknowledge that in order for life to return to normal people need to feel safe. The attitude of, if you don't feel safe stay at home is just not going to cut it for me. I fully support the vaccine passport if it means people can return to some resemblance of a pre-covid life.

7. What is your plan for publicly-funded services (examples would include Medicine Hat Public Library, power plant, facilities) if elected?

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Public services are a vital importance to our community. The centralized facility such as the Leisure Center is a great idea but makes it very difficult for those without vehicles to access it with an already confusing Transit System. Every Community should have at least a small facility where kids can get on a bike and ride to themselves. Southlands is a good example of this. Kids are required to frequently wait the 2 hours for their parents to get home from work in order to get to a swimming pool. More foresight is needed when it comes to things like this. We didn't just find out that our swimming pools and arenas were getting old this year.

8. How important is it for our region to have a local Community College? What specific steps could the municipality do to work better with Medicine Hat College to provide ongoing opportunities for future learners?

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Community colleges are a vital importance. Community colleges offer less expensive post-secondary education options, smaller class sizes, and more flexibility. Community College graduates graduate with less debt and more job options. A substantial amount of Hatter's make the drive out to Brooks campus every morning. This puts an enormous amount of strain on them financially as they are already in debt from going to school. The city of Medicine Hat should step up and offer bus transportation to and from Medicine Hat college and Brooks campus at a reasonable and affordable price. This would also have the side effect of significantly reducing wear and tear on the students vehicles and the emissions that they produce.

9. How will you attract newcomers to the district and address the needs for a skilled workforce? \*

In order to attract a skilled Workforce we have to have places for them to work. Our community here for families is strong but we need good paying jobs to encourage those families to move and stay here. Establishing relationships with educational partners is the first step. Prioritize safety and wellness in the workplace to ensure everyone can go to work everyday with peace of mind. Above all, the city

needs to be more open-minded to other possibilities and ready to engage those with ideas that are contradictory to our own.

10. What is your stance on the importance of mental health & wellness support in our region? What ideas, implementations, and initiatives would you put forward to improve the overall mental health & wellbeing of our community?

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The mental health and drug crisis is not a Medicine Hat problem, it's in North America problem. More Municipal support for events like the United Way Spirit of Christmas feast go a long way to helping those who suffer with depression feel less lonely. Our society has a crisis, and it's being caused by a lack of Hope. It's everybody's responsibility, not just Municipal governments to give hope to those who have lost it. More community outreach programs are badly needed.

11. How will you further diversity and inclusion initiatives in our region, as it relates to each of the pillars in the Chamber's Vote Prosperity Platform: <https://www.medicinehatchamber.com/voteprosperity2021/> (<https://www.medicinehatchamber.com/voteprosperity2021/>)

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Utilizing the newest technology makes diversity and inclusivity so much easier. Being able to scan QR code's on your smart phone for faster entry to local Business is one way technology has enabled persons with vaccinations to enjoy an evening out at at restaurant or a local event. Allowing rapid test negative results allows those who are unvaccinated to be included as well. We have become a divided society and need to work harder to find commonalities together. We all want the same things, we just have different ideas on how to get there. Infrastructure Infrastructure development is reciprocal. Local tax dollars should be spent to hire local construction companies and put back into the pockets of Hatter's, which is going to be partially spent at local businesses. The developments that come from an infrastructure focused program can build swimming pools and hockey rinks for our local communities. Making recreation facilities accessible and making sure they can be utilized by all walks of life. Focusing on infrastructure development is a win-win-win for everyone. Image & Branding If you are looking to Brand the city of Medicine Hat why not brand the most important thing in Medicine Hat that makes our city beautiful, it's people! Medicine Hat is a warm and inviting city full of people who are good to one another. These are the things we should advertise, this should be our brand! (Medicine Hat, welcome home!) Business and financial support

Workforce Development The city of Medicine Hat needs to create a department of small business advocacy. This department should encourage entrepreneurship by helping educate people who want to start a business how to navigate the complex provincial and municipal codes. Access to all resources such as health and safety, as well as grants. We need to teach people how to better navigate the system and not drowned them in red tape. More local owners will eventually mean more local jobs. Retail jobs are how many college students work their way through college and post secondary education.

12. On a municipal level, how do you intend to address climate change and pollution?

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The city of Medicine Hat is in a unique position to be a leader in future energy production. People get angry when they hear the words global warming, the greenhouse effect, and Green energy. I like to look at it this way. I leave those terms to the scientists and the people who really understand what they mean. I do know one thing is certain, I know that my 2006 GMC envoy burns more fuel than the 2015 edition, I know that the 2015 edition burns more fuel than the 2021 edition. I know that if we fear the Future and refuse to evolve then that leaves us stuck in the past. Medicine Hat will get left behind as the rest of the world moves on without it if it does not start investing in what any of those terms mean above that I leave to scientists. More electric charging stations in more appropriate locations like downtown! Municipality funded education and a push for education in renewable energy at Medicine Hat College.

13. What strategies will you use to communicate and engage with the community and remain accountable to the citizens?

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You can't know what people need or want unless you communicate with them. As much as every city counselor and every candidate says they would love to get out in the community and sit down and talk with everybody, reality is that this is not going to be possible. Initiatives like BREWD which I was proud to be one of the founding members of, are of vital importance to open up channels of communication in our community. You can't ask for assistance from provincial and federal governments unless you know what your citizens need. You can sit and talk to 100 people a day and get a hundred different answers and still never really get a picture of what your community needs as a whole unless you have the ability to collect and manage all that data.

14. Are there any other issues you wish to address or highlight that were not mentioned in the questions above?

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What I don't understand is why nobody is talking about senior Workforce Development. I have lost count of the amount of conversations I have had with people approaching retirement who feel like they have been pushed out of the workforce and been labeled as unhireable. We need to start programs on a municipal level like (employ a senior citizen program) and give people who are retired, on fixed incomes the ability to better support themselves. Municipal governments need to have a louder voice and push provincial and federal governments for more funding for senior citizens in long-term care. Our parents and our grandparents have been the biggest victims of this pandemic. As somebody who is about to turn 46 and who for the first time in his life is looking towards retirement in 20 years, I am truly scared to be in the position that we have put our senior citizens in now. Everybody is so focused on getting rid of the stigma that Medicine Hat is a retirement community that I fear this will hurt our senior citizens even more than they have already been hurt over the last two years. We cannot push aside one generation for another just because they have gotten older.